



WEST
EUGENE

WETLANDS PLAN

City of Eugene and Lane County
Eugene, Oregon • May 2004



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This plan was originally developed by an intergovernmental staff team with project management from the Lane Council of Governments. The team included representatives from various City of Eugene departments and divisions including: Planning and Development, Public Works, Finance, Parks, Business Assistance, and Intergovernmental Relations.

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The West Eugene Wetlands Partnership

The west Eugene wetlands are managed through a formal partnership among the City of Eugene, The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps. The partnership may change over time. The goal of the partnership is to manage the wetland system in a cooperative manner. The partners dedicate resources within their respective budgets to carry out this plan with attention to their own missions and legal requirements.

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CHAPTER KEY

1. Objectives and Highlights

2. Introduction

3. Resource Protection

4. Development and Mitigation

5. Operating, Maintaining and Monitoring

6. Financing

7. Future Studies

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Glossary

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Preface

When significant wetlands were identified in Eugene's primary industrial development area, wetlands were defined as a problem. Now, several years later, the West Eugene Wetlands Plan (WEWP) provides a clearer focus on the issues raised by the wetlands discovered in west Eugene and sets forth a vision that can achieve a balance of development needs and environmental values.

Between then and now, the Plan area has been the subject of a great deal of scrutiny and study. Inventories of habitat value, wetland boundaries and wetlands functions and values have been conducted. This information has been shared with the community, including property owners, environmental groups, and other interested citizens through newsletters, workshops, field trips, and in other forums.

We now know that there are wetlands of greater and lesser value. Many are full-functioning wetlands that have the proper mix of water, soils and wetlands plants. Some wetlands in west Eugene contain remnants of prairie grassland communities which once dominated the southern Willamette Valley. On these wetland sites, rare plants and insects have been discovered. Other wetlands in west Eugene contribute to flood control and help purify storm water.

We also know that less than a quarter of the total acreage of wetlands are of lower value and can be designated for development. Because loss of even these lower valued wetlands must be compensated for, the proposal for creation of a system of restored and enhanced wetlands ("mitigation bank") has been developed as part of this plan.

At the same time, it is evident that west Eugene is uniquely suited to provide a connected system of protected and restored wetlands along the major waterways that run through the area. With the wetland system contemplated in this plan, the west Eugene wetlands can protect rare plants, provide an open space greenway along the area's major streams, provide for water quality improvements that meet increased federal requirements, and at the same time help protect people and property from flooding.

This unique opportunity may not only be of value for the west Eugene area, but may serve as a focal point for wetland restoration and replacement for development in other parts of the Eugene urban area. With the adoption and implementation of the plan, community resources can be marshaled to assist in development of the lower-value wetlands and a combination of federal, state and local resources can be used

to protect, restore and enhance the remaining wetlands. In the resulting Plan, federal and state requirements can be addressed at the local level, resulting in reduced time in the permitting process.

The community has a significant opportunity in the west Eugene area to create development that recognizes and is sensitive to the adjacent natural resources, while at the same time protecting that resource and enhancing its ability to meet a range of community objectives. Many of the public facility costs needed in the area over the coming decades can be used for multiple purposes, creating wetlands that filter pollution from storm run-off and replacing investments in more traditional forms of storm drainage facilities.



Photo: Oregon ash tree in the Willow Creek Natural Area. (photo by N. Björklund)

It is this multiple objective approach that is reflected in this comprehensive Plan. It is not simply a Plan to protect wetlands or to free wetlands up for development, it is a Plan that balances environmental concerns with development needs. It is a Plan that proposes to meld our public facility needs with the environment to create a better open space system in west Eugene. It is a Plan that suggests a variety of techniques for spreading the costs of the recommendations out among several funding sources over a period of time to make the system affordable to this community.

In 1989, the WEWP planning process began with a series of citizen workshops. The process was designed to include broad participation by property owners, the development community, environmental groups, state and federal agency representatives, and other interested citizens. During 1989, more detailed inventory work was conducted. This Plan is a result of scientific study and local community involvement; it is a Plan that strives to integrate environmental protection with economic development within the framework of state and federal wetland programs.

The Plan's first two chapters present Plan Objectives and Highlights and a general introduction. The next five chapters address: Resource Protection; Development and Mitigation; Operating, Maintaining, and Monitoring; Financing; and Future Studies. A companion document to this Plan is the more detailed Technical Report. By putting the detailed background material in the Technical Report, the Plan remains smaller, provides clearer direction guiding future actions, and allows for broader public distribution. The Plan focuses attention on the individual wetland sites, goals, policies, and recommended actions. The Plan also contains a list of future public improvement projects that directly and indirectly affect the study area. The terms "goals, policies, and recommended actions" are defined below.

Goals are broad statements of philosophy and are adopted by the City Council and Lane County Board of Commissioners. They may never be completely attainable, but they describe the hopes of the people and help establish direction.

Policies provide the basis for consistent action to move the community toward its goals. Policies are adopted by the City Council and the Lane County

Board of Commissioners. These policies are used to evaluate actions relative to the Plan.

Recommended Actions are ideas on how to implement the policies, but are not adopted by the City Council or the Board of County Commissioners. They suggest ways the policies may be carried out and are reviewed, studied, and revised over time. They may or may not be implemented in the form in which they appear. Recommended actions are evaluated in light of their ability to address the Plan's goal and policy direction while considering community aspirations, financial options, and legal requirements.

In 1992, the Eugene City Council and Lane County Board of Commissioners adopted the West Eugene Wetlands Plan, a refinement to the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area General Plan. Below are listed the specific ordinance numbers and the date of adoption by each jurisdiction.

- Eugene City Council adopted amendments to the Draft Plan, May 20, 1992, Ordinance No. 19853.
- Lane County Board of Commissioners adopted amendments and added additional amendments, July 22, 1992, Ordinance No. PA 1019.
- Eugene City Council adopted new amendments, August 10, 1992, Ordinance No. 19867.
- Lane County Board of Commissioners amended Ordinance No. PA 1019 to add changes inadvertently omitted from that ordinance, August 26, 1992, Ordinance No. PA 1019-A.

The West Eugene Wetlands Plan was revised through a coordinated set of amendments initiated by the City of Eugene. The amendments were accomplished via a series of ordinances adopted by the Eugene City Council and the Lane County Board of Commissioners from 1993-2000. The ordinance numbers and adoption dates for each are listed below.

- Eugene City Council Ordinance No. 20002 adopted on March 6, 1995, and Lane County Board Ordinance No. PA 1075 adopted on May 30, 1995. These amendments revised the designations on three small wetland sites, deleted three outdated policies, and made minor corrections to the text of the Plan.
- Eugene City Council Ordinance No. 20119 adopted on May 20, 1998 and Lane County Board Ordinance No. PA 1117 adopted on June 24,

1998. These amendments added new policies to address planned transportation improvements and existing utilities in protected wetland areas.

- Eugene City Council Ordinance No. 20126 adopted on July 8, 1998 and No. 20171 adopted October 11, 1999; and Lane County Board Ordinance No. PA 1106 adopted on November 10, 1998 and No. PA 1133 adopted November 23, 1999. These amendments made significant revisions and updates to Plan policy and text to reflect new information.
- Eugene City Council Ordinance No. 20147, Ordinance No. PA 1129, adopted on April 21, 1999. These amendments applied the new Planned Transportation Corridor wetland designation to two small wetlands on City owned land.
- Eugene City Council Ordinance No. 20200, adopted on July 26, 2000 and Lane County Board Ordinance No. PA 1107, adopted on August 30, 2000. These amendments applied wetland designations to wetlands mapped after the adoption of the original plan, and revised wetland designations on a number of existing wetland sites.
- Eugene City Council Ordinance No. 20201, adopted on August 7, 2000, and Lane County Board Ordinance No. PA 1109, adopted on September 13, 2000. These amendments designated wetlands on Site HG (the Hyundai site), which were mapped after the adoption of the original Plan.
- Eugene City Council Ordinance No. 20208, adopted on September 11, 2000, and Lane County Board Ordinance No. PA 1108, adopted on November 1, 2000. These amendments revised wetland designations for existing wetlands and designated newly mapped wetlands on Site H2 (the Eugene Speedway site).